3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER XII

Amusements & Relaxations

517 I HAVE already said that the average African is a man with an abundance of spare time on his hands, and the situation suits him exactly. But even with him it may pall, and something more than mere lying in the sun must be found to fill the idle hours. A full account of the numerous games and amusements would fill a small volume, and a few examples must suffice.

526 Association football is now very popular in many parts of Africa, and Konde youths take up the game with zest; but it can be enjoyed only at Mission schools, or at Government stations, or wherever there is a white man sufficiently interested to provide a ball, and to give some instruction in the game. They kick from the ball of the great toe, as direct kicking with bare feet is impossible. To score a goal is "to give the egg" to the losers, a phrase taken from one of their own games, where a rubber ball is knocked about with sticks by two sides, to attain a given objective, when the losing side is said to get "the egg."

545 I was once present at a school concert to which audience and performers gathered from many different villages. The programme, when presented to me by

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

the committee, contained no less than eighty-one items. I asked the committee to reduce it by at least a half, but after earnest wrestling with the problem, they returned and said that I must do the reduction myself. By the simple method of drawing my pencil through every second item, I reduced the programme to forty-one, but I did it to the mournful head-shakings of the committee. The performance was a mixture of native songs, games, dances, and Christian hymns, and dragged its weary length far into the afternoon. But there was compensation. Eight or ten boys of about ten years old came on to the platform, and gave a "show" of a European doctor examining people for signs of sleeping sickness, regarding which there was a great scare at the time. The little fellow who acted the doctor was nothing less than an imitative genius, the kick with which he finally dismissed the examinees being done "to the life," and it never failed to raise uproarious laughter in the great audience.

Of purely native games and amusements the number is legion.

Ingongwe is the large purple lump at the end of a growing bunch of bananas. It is rolled on the ground and pursued by yelling boys, armed with pointed sticks, each jabbing at it as it rolls, until one lifts it triumphantly on his stick.

Ikimbenengwa. Two pounding sticks are laid parallel to each other. One boy holds a third across, lifting and lowering it rhythmically, while another tries to hold it down by putting his foot on it. If he